

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 10-14 are pending.

**Response to Claim Rejections Under § 102**

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 11-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,913,652 to Imamura. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The present invention, as recited in Claim 1, is characterized in that (A) the synthetic polyisoprene rubber has a cis-1,4-bond content of not less than 99.0%, a 3,4-bond content of not more than 0.5% and a Mooney viscosity  $ML_{1+4}$  (100°C) of 20-110.

Imamura discloses that a synthetic isoprene rubber having not less than 95% of cis-1,4-isoprene unit and a Mooney viscosity of not less than 40 is preferable. See, col. 2, lines 23-25. However, Imamura fails to disclose or suggest a synthetic polyisoprene rubber having a cis-1,4-bond content of not less than 99.0% and a 3,4-bond content of not more than 0.5%.

Thus, Imamura fails to anticipate or render obvious the present claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Response to Claim Rejections Under § 103**

Claims 1, 5, 6, 10 and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over EP 0 893 281 to Hendrik. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Hendrik discloses a composition comprising 60-100 pphr of natural rubber and/or synthetic isoprene rubber with a cis-1,4-content of more than 90 mol%, and 45-80 pphr of fillers. However, Hendrik fails to disclose or suggest a synthetic polyisoprene rubber having a cis-1,4-bond content of not less than 99.0% and a 3,4-bond content of not more than 0.5%.

According to the present invention, when a rubber component of the rubber composition contains 10-60 mass% of the synthetic polyisoprene rubber having a cis-1,4-bond content of not less than 99.0% and a 3,4-bond content of not more than 0.5%, the processability of the rubber composition can be highly improved while suppressing the deterioration of the wear resistance and durability. In this regard, Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to the results shown in Table 1 of the present specification.

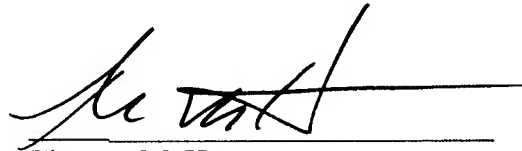
It is submitted that one skilled in the art would not expect these results given the disclosure of Hendrik.

Thus, Hendrik fails to render obvious the present claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas M. Hunter', is written over a horizontal line.

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**23373**

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: November 10, 2011